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TAGS: [UNSC](#) [KV](#) [YI](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: SERBIAN PERMREP SEEMS TO BACK OFF FROM TOUGH
KOSTUNICA STATEMENT

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) On September 11, Serbian Permrep Pavle Jevremovic met with Ambassador Wolff in the wake of Prime Minister Kostunica's statement to members of the Security Council (e-mailed to Department) that had called on them "to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia from the US policy of force." Sounding almost apologetic, Jevremovic said the matter was behind us now, but, explained that he had been instructed earlier in the week to meet with all P-5 members. He added that emotions were high over the Kosovo status process so we should control rhetoric and try to prevent further unwelcome developments in the future.

12. (C) Ambassador Wolff responded that we, too, believed it was important to control unhelpful rhetoric which had come from Belgrade, including inflammatory and dangerous statements from Kostunica about "NATO forming a state" and those of another official about Serbian troops being re-positioned in Kosovo. We were committed to the Troika process and wanted it to succeed. However, given the history and politics of the region we had to be realistic about the possibility that the Troika process might not result in the perfect outcome of agreement between the parties. We were also firm that this would not be an open-ended process and would culminate December 10.

13. (C) Sounding his usual moderate tone, Jevremovic responded that the US approach to Kosovo made sense, but it took time for perceptions in Serbia to change and people to confront reality. He agreed there was "no military option" and that statement had been "inappropriate." The worst outcome, he said with disarming frankness, would be "for the Security Council to decide tomorrow to let Kosovo be part of Serbia and just leave." Ambassador Wolff responded it was equally unrealistic from what we know to expect Belgrade to publicly agree to Kosovo's independence. The prospect of protracted negotiations involving an inflexible Serbia could only slow Serbia's transition to Europe and even deepen instability in the region. Jevremovic said he did not necessarily disagree, but we should look at the "quality" of independence and then pitched the recent Serbian proposal to allow autonomy except in certain areas.

14. (C) Comment: The Serbian Mission forwarded USUN Kostunica's harsh statement after the meeting, emphasizing it was connected to the demarche. Jevremovic not associating himself with the statement at all in the meeting, may be more evidence of the clear unease Jevremovic has with the approach of conservatives in Belgrade.
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